



Department of Administration
Intergovernmental Relations Division

Tom Barrett
Mayor

Sharon Robinson
Director of Administration

Jennifer Gonda
Director of Intergovernmental Relations

Milwaukee's Residency Requirement

The Legislature's Joint Committee on Finance is currently considering the Governor's budget proposal to prohibit Wisconsin municipalities from imposing residency requirements on their employees. The City of Milwaukee has had such a requirement in place since 1938. All applicants to city positions are clearly informed of the requirement upfront and the City does not have any difficulty attracting quality applicants or retaining its employees as a result.

Right now, our goal is to ask members of the Joint Committee on Finance to recognize the provision as non-fiscal policy and to require that it be heard through the regular legislative committee process.

Thank you for your offer to help make our case. Here are some talking points that can be used in your legislative contacts:

1. Residency is not fiscal policy and should not be included in the state budget. Let this issue be fully vetted in the regular committee process so that Milwaukee and other affected communities can fully testify to the impact.
2. Residency concerns are a matter of local control and should be fashioned according to local market conditions and local economic factors that state legislators may not be fully aware of.
3. Residency requirements are a condition of employment. The state would never dictate the terms of employment for a private employer (e.g. Drug testing). Private employers (e.g. Consulting firms) and other public employers (e.g. Military) set location and relocation requirements all the time.
4. In Milwaukee, residency requirements are a valuable economic provision in collective bargaining contracts with Police and Fire employees. If the unions get this change legislatively for free, city taxpayers (including businesses) stand to lose millions of dollars of value that could have been exchanged at the bargaining table. We are at the table with all 3 public safety unions right now.
5. The health of the Milwaukee-area economy and the health of the City of Milwaukee's economy are interdependent. Milwaukee has done a good job of retaining population and middle class residents in comparison with its peer cities. The residency policy helps stabilize and build confidence in our neighborhoods and promotes public safety and property value for our residents and businesses. This serves to strengthen our region as a whole.
6. This is bad timing given the impact of the foreclosure crisis on city property values. Milwaukee has already lost \$5 billion in value. Why run the risk of pushing values further down? City property values have a ripple effect on the values of the entire region.
7. Many local business leaders lead companies that are invested in the City through their corporate real estate holdings and client bases. We have a collective responsibility to ensure that the full impact of important policies affecting our region is understood by our policy makers.
8. Police-community relations have recently been strained in Milwaukee with a couple high profile events. Removing the police officers from living in the community they serve is certain to add to community concerns about our force.